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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 14 February 2011 from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and, regarding the decision of the Government of the Czech Republic to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 at the elections to be held in New York in May 2011, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, has the honour to enclose the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Czech Republic in the field of the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 14 February 2011 from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Czech Republic to the Human Rights Council, 2011-2014

Voluntary pledges and commitments in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006

The Czech Republic has the honour to refer to its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014.

The promotion and protection of human rights is of the utmost importance to the Czech Republic. On the basis of its own historical experience, the Czech Republic attaches great importance to the universal promotion, protection and implementation of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The promotion and protection of human rights constitutes one of the fundamental principles which the Czech Republic adheres to in its foreign as well as domestic policy. Continued attention is paid to universal and regional mechanisms that complement the existing national mechanisms.

Adherence to United Nations treaties in the field of human rights

The Czech Republic has ratified all core United Nations treaties in the field of human rights. As pledged when submitting its candidature to the Human Rights Council in 2006, the Czech Republic ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on 10 July 2006 and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on 15 November 2006. The Czech Republic has been fully cooperating with all respective treaty bodies.

Cooperation with special procedures

The Czech Republic supports the work of all United Nations special procedures and promotes effective cooperation with these mechanisms: it was among the first countries to have extended a standing invitation to them.

Universal periodic review

The Czech Republic was also one of the first countries examined in the framework of the universal periodic review in 2008. Since then, it has made considerable efforts, in partnership with civil society, to implement the recommendations addressed to it.

The Government of the Czech Republic pledges to work for the promotion and protection of human rights during its future membership of the Human Rights Council through the following voluntary commitments:

At the international level

- To actively participate in the work of the Council, with a view to further enhancing its credibility and efficiency, in particular through **adequate and timely responses to human rights violations** wherever they occur
- To **cooperate fully with all of the Council's special procedures**, to which the Czech Republic issued a standing invitation in September 2000, and to rapidly respond to any requests for visits
- To strongly support the **engagement of non-governmental organizations** with the Human Rights Council
- To engage fully in the **universal periodic review**, participate actively in the interactive dialogues with States under review and implement recommendations made during the first session of April 2008 during the examination of the Czech Republic
- To fully cooperate with the **treaty monitoring bodies** by, inter alia, submitting its periodic reports within the set deadlines and following up on the recommendations made by those bodies
- To **fight torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment**, including through support to the work of the **Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture** where the Czech Republic is represented by an independent member since the establishment of the body in 2007
- To closely cooperate with the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** and maintain its voluntary financial contributions at its current level
- To contribute, through **national development cooperation and transition promotion policy**, to the support for and protection of human rights, the rule of law, democracy and good governance in partner countries
- To continue its active participation in the drafting of the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child** to provide a communications procedure
- To maintain strong commitment to protection and promotion of the **rights of the child**, including by continuous support to the United Nations Children's Fund and by supporting the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in relation to the participation of the Czech Republic in the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict
- To pay close attention to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and to the issue of **corporate social responsibility** in general

- To closely follow and support the newly created **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women**, in a follow-up to the leading role of the Czech Republic during its presidency of the European Union in the extensive plenary discussions on this issue, and in follow-up to its membership in the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, including by exploring the possibility to contribute financially to the new entity

- To actively participate in the work of the **Peacebuilding Commission** and to financially support the Peacebuilding Fund, aiding solutions to the challenges faced by people (and women in particular) in post-conflict periods in the fields of human rights, the rule of law, mediation and post-conflict planning and governance

- To support the **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP), also in follow-up to its presidency of the Executive Board of UNDP/United Nations Population Fund on behalf of the Eastern European regional group

At the national level

- To fully implement **obligations arising from international treaties**, such as the recently ratified **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (28 September 2009)

- To fully implement and enforce **national human rights legislation**, such as the **anti-discrimination act** (Act on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination, also Amending Certain Other Acts), in force since 1 September 2009

- To ratify the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

- To examine the possibility of signing and ratifying the International **Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance**

- To examine the possibility of ratifying the **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children**, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

- To examine the possibility of signing and ratifying other human rights treaties, such as the **Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

- To implement measures to ensure protection of children from physical and mental violence and to **reduce the number of children living in institutional care** facilities by supporting alternative family care

- To strengthen the participation of **civil society** in the implementation of the **recommendations made during the universal periodic review**

- To maintain its **support for national, regional and international non-governmental organizations** which contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights

- To continue to allocate considerable funds and to **support projects** and programmes aimed at the protection and integration of **vulnerable groups, including Roma** and other minorities
- To support **social integration of people living in socially excluded localities**, in particular through the Government's Agency for Social Integration in Roma Localities
- To implement **the Concept for Roma Integration** for 2010-2013 approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in December 2009 that includes measures to improve the situation of Roma with a view to increasing, inter alia, the number of Roma pupils and students within the educational mainstream
- To implement **the National Plan for Creating Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities** for 2010-2014 approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in March 2010 that includes measures to improve, inter alia, the situation of persons with disabilities in the areas of employment and education.